

**Testimony for Public Hearing
Connecticut State Legislature - Education Committee
March 7, 2016**

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The Village Initiative Project, Inc.-
V.I.P. College Preparatory Program
1000 Lafayette Boulevard, Suite 408
Bridgeport, CT 06604**

RE: Senate Bill No. 379

Good Afternoon Education Committee Members. My name is Teresa Wilson, and I am the Executive Director of The Village Initiative Project, Inc.-V.I.P. College Preparatory & Life Skills Program. Since 1993, I have been involved in exposing students from Bridgeport area elementary and high schools to the benefits of higher education through weekly college prep workshops and college tours, which are held at least 3-4 times per year.

As a member of the Minority Teacher Recruitment Task Force, I want to thank Senator Marilyn Moore for appointing me to serve on such an important project. It was a pleasure to serve with the caliber of concerned citizens who took the time out of their very busy schedules to address this dire situation. Our children are dying; and death comes in many forms! African American, Latino, and Asian students, who attend schools in Connecticut, need to have many more male and female teachers who look like them in their classrooms. Afrika Lyons. I will never forget her. She has a Master's degree in Education, school psychology, and an additional advanced degree in school psychology. She cannot receive a job in Connecticut due to the requirements of the Praxis I Test. (testimony included) When I asked her how many times she took the test, she stated, either 4 or 5 times. While serving on the MTRTF and sharing her experience with others in Bridgeport, I was amazed at how many adults of color I spoke with that have had similar experiences. These are highly intelligent, credentialed, people of color who love children and absolutely need to be in Connecticut classrooms. Afrika sat at the public hearing, I believe with her mother and grandmother, who I presume had supported her throughout her educational journey. She did everything she was suppose to do; and then gets denied a position it seems her heart is set on. It's not fair. It was an eye opener to hear Dr. Anne Dichele, Director of Teacher Preparation at Quinnipiac University use the terms "Jim Crow" and "segregation" during her testimony as it pertains to the teaching profession in Connecticut. In her testimony, she suggests that " a teaching license should not be denied on the basis of the tests administered in Connecticut. It is time to think out of the box. We will not resolve this problem of minority teacher candidates until we address the inherent bias of these high-stakes tests, their poor design, their lack of validity, and reliability, and most importantly, questioning a State Department of Education that is building their entire assessment of teacher quality programming on the basis of what ETS and Pearson decide is important to teaching."